

# ***The Electric Mercury***

**U.S. Army Medical Command Electronic News Summary, November 2000**

**For more on these and other important stories, see November 2000 printed issue of The Mercury.  
This is a service of the Public Affairs Office, Headquarters MEDCOM.**

## **Medics prepare for new 91W MOS**

Soldiers in Military Occupational Specialties 91B (Medical Specialist) and 91C (Clinical Specialist) will convert to 91W (Health Care Specialist) next year. The new MOS means more highly trained medics for field and hospital. Oct. 1, current medics will get the new MOS with a Y2 Additional Skill Identifier, which will not limit assignments/promotions and will be removed when transition criteria are met. Active Component soldiers get six years and Reserve Component soldiers eight years to transition, through training courses and national Emergency Medical Technician certification. High-ranking NCOs will be “grandfathered.” New medics get a 16-week training course, versus the old 10 weeks.

## **Aplin gets top enlisted job**

Article provides biographical information on CSM James M. Aplin, whose selection by LTG James B. Peake to be MEDCOM command sergeant major and senior enlisted advisor to The Surgeon General was announced by Peake in his personal column in the October *Mercury*. Aplin, a 25-year veteran, was most recently the command sergeant major for Great Plains Regional Medical Command and Brooke Army Medical Center.

## **Softball tourney features lots of action**

Fort Hood MEDDAC averages almost 15 runs a game as it claims men’s championship in MEDCOM softball tournament with an 8-1 record. Fort Rucker wins women’s crown, also at 8-1. Tournament was held in September at Fort Sam Houston. Kicked off by a dramatic front-page photo, the *Mercury*’s coverage includes a story and additional photos inside, along with a listing of the men’s and women’s All-Tournament teams.

## **AMEDD must reduce hassle factor**

Each AMEDD member is empowered to help beneficiaries cut through the hassle factor in health care, writes LTG James B. Peake in his personal column. Anyone who cannot fix a problem should bump it upwards until it does get fixed. The new authorization bill enhancing the health-care benefit – especially for over-65 retirees – presents challenges, Peake says, but it is also a wonderful opportunity to do what is right.

Other important stories in the November *Mercury* include:

- After 10 years of studies, defense officials still do not know why some Gulf War veterans suffer from unexplained ailments and others do not. There is no consistent pattern. But veterans' concerns about possible exposure to chemicals and biological agents are taken seriously and the search for answers will continue, officials pledge.
- U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense (USAMRICD) wins 2000 Army Research and Development Organization of the Year in small-laboratory category.
- Ten-member surgical team from Madigan Army Medical Center operates on 45 urological/gynecological patients during two-week humanitarian mission in Honduras.
- Peacekeeping is a family affair for MAJ Richard Carpenter, a psychologist, and his son SSG Christopher Carpenter, a medic. Both are Army Reservists in the 313th Hospital Unit (Surgical). The father is in Kosovo; the son is in Macedonia. Back in Missouri they belong to different units, but the 313th comprises soldiers from 15 units in four states.
- The world's largest medical simulation exercise, AMEDDEX 2000, is held at Fort Sam Houston, with the 30th Medical Brigade controlling real-world deployed units to test a reengineered field command post and new high-tech communications gear.
- Medical units from the continental U.S. and fillers from Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii, set up and use 504-bed field hospital in exercise MEDEX 2000, Sagami, Japan.
- Tonyo Sylvester, Fort Jackson MEDDAC, tries out for U.S. Olympic team. The shotputter – a former high-school state champion, junior-college national champion, and All-Army team member – doesn't make the team but plans to try again in 2004.
- Photos show a 520th Theater Army Medical Laboratory technician testing DNA during exercise, a Tripler Army Medical Center officer helping clean up a Hawaiian harbor, and a worker testing a child's flexibility at Fort McPherson health carnival.
- On commentary page, SGM Kevin B. Stuart of the 2nd Infantry Division describes what he thinks the NCO's role as "backbone of the Army" really means; and letter writer SGT Robert Ingwersen offers added information on an endurance-riding article.
- Four disabled people and new assistance dogs graduate from two-week course at AIM HI (Animals in the Military Helping Individuals) Service Dog Training Center, Fort Knox, Ky. Before dogs are matched with owners who need their help, they are trained by inmates at the Fort Knox Regional Correction Center. In four years, 26 prisoners have completed the dog trainers program and returned to society with a marketable skill.

● U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine offers food-safety tips, noting that foodborne disease sickens 76 million, hospitalizes 325,000 and kills 5,200 people annually in the U.S.